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Rajasic Culture and Technics

During the Tellurian Renaissance period, as well as the time of the beginnings of modern "science", there was also a huge revival of the arcane arts. While with hindsight the triumph of the "scientific world-view" may seem inevitable, Professor C.S. Lewis points out that at the time it was not at all clear which of the two tendencies - that toward the culture now labelled "scientific" or that toward psychic and "magical" practice - that is to say, the more traditional sciences - was the current of the future.

We should note that both are Rajasic tendencies and both have to do with the extreme manipulation of nature for human ends. We should also understand that, since *scientia* simply means "knowledge", it is likely that whichever tendency had prevailed would have adopted the unqualified term "science" for its particular approach to knowledge.

In Aristasia the schism between the two forms of Rajasic science never took place, and to this day, Aristasian technics incorporate principles that would be meaningless to the purely-material science of Telluria. Whether these would work in Telluria is not certain.

Aristasian art also moved toward naturalistic styles in the West. There is still a considerable Sattwic element in much Westrenne art, and the aberrations of post-modernism and deformism (confusingly often termed "modern art" since the beginning of the 20th Century) have never taken place. On the other hand a huge stress on fantasy, extreme sentimentality and unrestrained imagination characterises much Westrenne art. This is criticised by some Aristasian traditionalists. It may also account for the attraction of some Tellurian Aristasians to certain elements of Japanese modern popular culture.(1)

The question then arises as to whether a Western Rajasic culture developed along Platonic or non-substantialist lines would have achieved the technical success that the West in fact achieved.

It is pointed out, for example, that the magical kung-fu of such movements the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists (義和團 - known in the west as the "Boxers") was utterly

powerless to repel the foreign invaders with their machines of war.

There are two distinct schools of thought on this.

One is that the Terrestrial environment of Telluria (unlike Aristasia) became so consolidated in the latter part of the Age of Iron that non-material "technics" of all kinds were impossible and that this is why material science became such a force. According to this theory, the situation arose independently of the (conscious) activities of the Axial Being; and at the Renaissance, when the Western culture could have moved either in the material-scientific or the Platonic-scientific direction, only the latter would actually have been effective.

This does not mean that the second option was impossible - only that it would have left the Rajasic West at the same technical level as the rest of the (still Sattwic) world.

The other school of thought holds that the strong development of the Rajasic along a particular line (the material) influenced the Terrestrial environment. The world was bound to consolidate in the latter phases of the Cycle, but it consolidated in a very strongly material way because Maid, being the Axial Creature, has a profound effect on the world of which she is the psychic centre.

According to this second school of thought, the reason for the ineffectiveness of Eastern, non-materialist, responses to the West's Rajasic incursion would be that the world had entered a phase in which the Rajasic was necessarily more powerful than the Sattwic on the worldly plane. The Eastern responses, which were in any case sporadic, were certainly not the result of a fully-developed non-substantialist Rajasic world, such as would have been created in the West if the Platonic rather than the substantialist direction had been taken. On the contrary, they were responses that came out of a very late Sattwic society.

In Aristasia, the predominance of the Westrenne Empire is accepted in the East (certainly in the Westerly East) precisely because there is an understanding that the Time of the Rajasic has come. In this case, of course, there is no question of physical force being used by the West against the East (which would in any case be largely ineffective owing to the different constitution of the Terrestrial environment in Aristasia); but there is an understanding that while in earlier millennia the Great Mantle of Empire belonged in the East, in this age it belongs with the new Rajasic nations of the West.

In Aristasia this is coupled with an understanding in the West that the Sattwic East represents the Pure Tradition and the Higher Way.

In Telluria, the only way the East could compete with - and

avoid complete domination by - the West was to adopt the West's own Rajasic mode. This was done in Japan in the 1860s, adopting not only Western technics but Western dress and modes of organisation. It was a rapid, forced transition from the Japanese Sattwic to an imitation of the Western Rajasic, which had no roots in Japanese culture or development. It was very successful, and since that time, imitation of the West has been seen as the pattern for success in the East.

Whether the East will develop its own authentic Rajasic culture as it becomes economically and militarily predominant in Telluria, or whether it will continue to imitate an alien Rajasic culture, only time will tell.

End Note

(1) Though this should not be taken to mean that traditional Aristasian art is not full of miraculous events, demons, maiden-knights and strange creatures, because it is! What the Traditionalists complain of is the departure from the traditional themes with their spiritual depth and meaning in favour of the individual imagination, or of things that are "mere curiosities", or the pursuit of worldly (and other-worldly, but not Transcendent) beauty for its own sake.

In fact, what is being objected to is the Rajasic, outward, horizontal tendency as opposed to the Sattwic, upward, vertical tendency - the very tendency that has dominated the Tellurian West since the Renaissance. However, the Aristasian version of the Rajasic period, while it includes some naturalism, is much less centered on naturalism than the Tellurian Rajasic period; and much more concerned with the fantastical and emotionally beautiful.

No doubt this is because, since Aristasia had no Rationalist Revolution, with its inherent materialist tendencies, the concept of "down-to-earth realism" plays a much smaller role in Aristasian Rajasic culture.

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